

SOC 4-066 US (Edit. Opin)  
Institute of Strategic  
StudiesMIL 1 US/055R  
MIL 1 055R/05

## Ahead and Staying Ahead

The annual compilation of statistics on the armed forces of the world by the British Institute of Strategic Studies is a useful reference work. But its unofficial figures sometimes can be misleading.

This year, for instance, news stories from London quote the ISS as telling us that the Russians may be catching up with the United States in intercontinental ballistic missiles. At the first of this year, the ISS says, the United States had 745 ICBMs and Russia about 100. By the first of next year, again according to this report, the United States will have 925 and the Soviet Union more than 200. The seven-to-one American margin of a year ago will continue to diminish, the report apparently concludes.

Actually, figures on operational American ICBMs are available in the Pentagon, and are unclassified. On January 1 of this year the United States had 548 ICBMs (120 Atlas, 108 Titan and 320 Minuteman). Secretary of Defense McNamara told Congress in January that Russia then had somewhat more than 100.

On Jan. 1, 1965, the United States will have exactly 878 (an additional 330

Minuteman and 24 fewer of the obsolescing Atlas). Russia now has fewer than 200.

The United States is adding ICBMs at the rate of about one a day. The Russian pace, modern surveillance techniques show, is far slower—so much so that American officials are now considering an American slowdown. There is no use in building more missiles if the Russians don't provide sufficient targets for them.

This country now plans to have 1,254 ICBMs at the end of this decade. That number will be adjusted as the Russians build—or fail to build—a force larger than the 500 or 600 expected. The Russians are not catching up in any real sense, but if they should take a sudden spurt, so can we. Standby production facilities for the Minuteman could double the American output before the Russians would have a chance to pull even, and the planned phase-out of the rest of the Atlases and half the Titans could be postponed.

Obviously there is a missile gap. But it is very much in America's favor. And there is every reason to believe it will stay that way.